



Testimony of Xavier Gordon  
President, AFSCME Local 269  
Labor & Public Employees Committee Hearing  
Feb. 26, 2015  
HB 6788: An Act Concerning Workforce Investment Boards

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Good afternoon Senator Winfield, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Xavier Gordon. I am the President of AFSCME Local 269, representing employees of the Connecticut Department of Labor.

I would like to thank you for raising HB 6788: An Act Concerning Workforce Investment Boards to take a deeper look at how we provide assistance to job seekers and employers in Connecticut.

Members of my local union work in the Job Centers to improve the skills of our workforce, help employers find qualified applicants, and work with job seekers to write resumes and practice interview techniques. We provide one-on-one help, market services to businesses, allocate grants, develop written materials, and offer group courses. The bulk of funding for these programs are through what is known as federal "Wagner-Peyser" resources.

The federal government also funds the Workforce Investment Boards through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), but leaves it to the state to figure out how to make these programs fit together.

In the field, what we will find is that state DOL employees may hold a job fair on a Tuesday in one community, only to find out that the local WIB is holding a job fair that Thursday. This lack of coordination between the Boards and the state-run programs has understandably created frustration and confusion for job seekers and employers.

This bill is about better coordinating these programs for taxpayers. Job Centers are one of the key places where management of employment services can and should happen. A recent FOI request by our union revealed that over the past eight program years, Wagner-Peyser funding is paying an increased share of the Job Center total costs. One of the charts from this report is included below. This is at the same time that Wagner-Peyser federal funds have essentially flat-lined and WIA funds have increased.

I hope that with this bill, the DOL will be able to better analyze our entire employment services program in Connecticut and deliver to the legislature a report on the best way we can invest our tax dollars in helping residents find good paying jobs.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# Wagner-Peyser Is Largest Funding Source of CT's American Job Centers

